

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Number: CH 376

Name: GRV. HARVEY W. NICE, MEM. FOR. (#8039) US301
OVER POTOMAC RIVER

The bridge referenced herein was inventoried by the Maryland State Highway Administration as part of the Historic Bridge Inventory, and SHA provided the Trust with eligibility determinations in February 2001. The Trust accepted the Historic Bridge Inventory on April 3, 2001. The bridged received the following determination of eligibly.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST	
Eligibility Recommended <u> X </u>	Eligibility Not Recommended <u> </u>
Criteria: <u> A </u> <u> B </u> <u> C </u> <u> D </u>	Considerations: <u> A </u> <u> B </u> <u> C </u> <u> D </u> <u> E </u> <u> F </u> <u> G </u> <u>None</u>
Comments: _____ _____ _____	
Reviewer, OPS: <u> Anne E. Bruder </u>	Date: <u> 3 April 2001 </u>
Reviewer, NR Program: <u> Peter E. Kurtze </u>	Date: <u> 3 April 2001 </u>

Name and SHA No. Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge

Street/Road Name and Number: U.S. Route 301 over the Potomac River

City/Town: Newburg x vicinity

County: Charles

Ownership: State County Municipal x Other (*Maryland Toll Authority*)

This bridge projects over: __Road __Railway xWater __Land

Is the bridge located within a designated district: yes x no

NR listed district NR determined eligible district

__locally designated __other

Name of District _____

Bridge Type:

Timber Bridge

☐ Beam Bridge ☐ Truss-Covered ☐ Trestle ☐ Timber-and-Concrete

Stone Arch

Metal Truss Bridge

Movable Bridge

Swing Bascule Single Leaf Bascule Multiple Leaf

Vertical Lift Retractable Pontoon

Metal Girder

 Rolled Girder Rolled Girder Concrete Encased

Plate Girder Plate Girder Concrete Encased

Metal Suspension

Metal Arch

x Metal Cantilever

Concrete

Concrete Arch _ Concrete Slab _ Concrete Beam _ Rigid Frame

Other Type Name _____

Description:**Describe Setting:**

The Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge carries U.S. Route 301 across the Potomac River, connecting Charles County, Maryland, and King George County, Virginia. To the southwest, in Dahlgren, is the U.S. Naval Surface Weapons Center. To the northeast, near Newburg, is a treatment plant. The bridge is 1.7 miles long and 135 feet above the water.

Describe Superstructure and Substructure:
(Discuss points identified in Context Addendum, Section C)

According to the original report prepared by Greiner in 1938, the structure is a high level bridge with a

"horizontal clearance of 700 feet and a vertical clearance of 135 feet over the main ship channel of the Potomac. The main span over the channel forms the highest point in the roadway with 3.75 per cent grade approaches. The main channel span and the two side spans flanking it, comprise a cantilever unit, the main span of which is 800 feet long and the side spans of which are anchor spans each 366 feet 8 inches long. The cantilever units forming the approaches to this central unit are made up of alternate spans and cantilever spans 437 feet 6 inches and 500 feet long, respectively.

The main section of the bridge is approached from the Virginia end by 63 spans of concrete pile bent and steel beam trestle construction 3873 feet long, and four plate girder spans 100 feet long, connecting trestle with the main cantilever section. On the Maryland side of the river, the main cantilever section of the bridge is approached by three 100 feet plate girder spans and two 250 feet simple truss spans connecting the filled approach with the main cantilever section."

Discuss major alterations:

The Nice Bridge had its bridge deck replaced during the 1980s, had ATAC installation, had fender system replacement, and had toll plaza modifications during the 1990s.

History:

When Built: March 1939 to December 1940

Why Built: to provide access from Maryland to Virginia

Who Built: Harris Structural Steel Company/Merritt, Chapman and Scott

Who Designed: J.E. Greiner and Company

Why Altered: n/a

Was this bridge built as part of an organized bridge building campaign: yes

The Nice Bridge was constructed as part of Maryland's Primary Bridge Program, initiated during the 1930s as a way to provide access to and from areas previously isolated from other parts of the state. As such, the bridge is potentially eligible under Criterion A for its role in encouraging inter- and intrastate transportation and commerce.

Surveyor Analysis:

This bridge may have NR significance for association with:

☒ A Events ☐ B Person

☒ C Engineering/Architectural Character

Was the bridge constructed in response to significant events in Maryland or local history?

This bridge was constructed as part of Maryland's Primary Bridge Program, which included a bridge across the Susquehanna River from Havre de Grace to Perryville, either a bridge or tunnel across the Baltimore Harbor, and a bridge across the Chesapeake Bay. This program was developed during the 1930s as a way to provide a continuous north-south highway that would connect Philadelphia to Richmond and bypass the major metropolitan areas of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. With automobile use on the rise, Maryland was committed to providing accessible roadways and bridges to connect its isolated areas.

When the bridge was built and/or given a major alteration, did it have a significant impact on the growth and development of the area?

Before the opening of the Nice Bridge, only ferry service was available between Maryland and Virginia along the Potomac River below Washington. With the advent of the bridge, traffic patterns shifted so that a steady flow of travelers infiltrated the area. Easy access from Maryland to Virginia helped stimulate growth on both sides of the river, but more importantly, aided in boosting interstate travel as a whole.

Is the bridge located in an area which may be eligible for historic designation and would the bridge add to or detract from the historic and visual character of the possible district?

The Nice Bridge may be in an area that is eligible for historic designation and would add to both the historic and visual character of the possible district.

Is the bridge a significant example of its type?

This bridge is a well-preserved example of the metal cantilever bridge. Additionally, it is the only known example of a metal cantilever bridge in the state of Maryland.

Does the bridge retain integrity of the important elements described in the Context Addendum?

This bridge possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. As mentioned above, very few significant alterations have occurred at this bridge. Thus, the bridge retains integrity of all of its original components, including the anchor arms, cantilever arms, central suspended span, piers, and abutments.

Is the bridge a significant example of the work of the manufacturer, designer, and/or engineer and why?

This is the only known example of a metal cantilever bridge in Maryland designed by Greiner. It is potentially eligible under Criterion C for its manufacture and design.

Should this bridge be given further study before significance analysis is made and why?

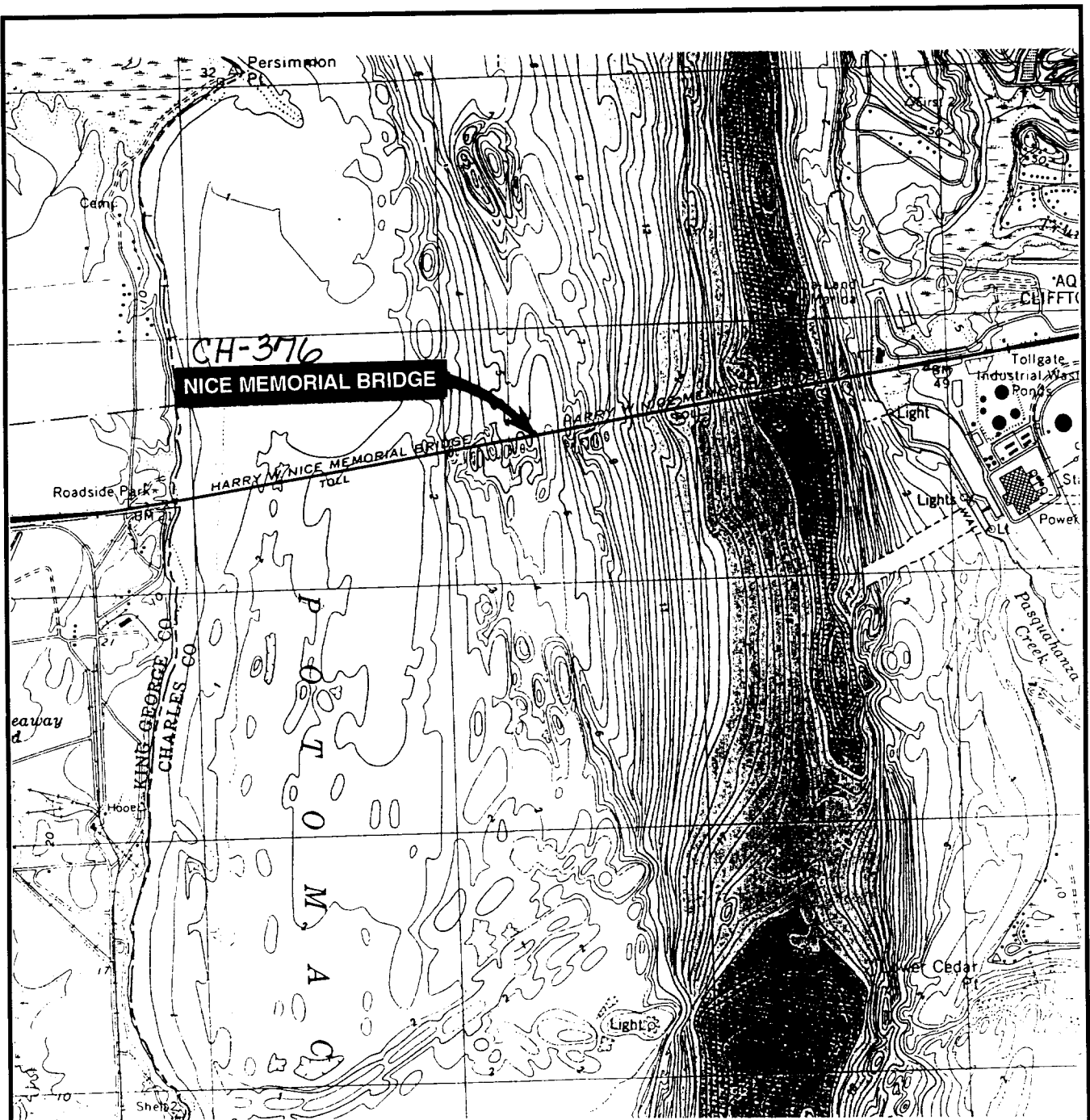
No further evaluation is necessary to determine National Register significance. However, additional research concerning the history of this bridge and its surroundings may be useful in providing a more complete picture of the bridge's background.

Provide black and white prints and negatives and color slides of bridge, details, and setting labeled according to NR Bulletin 16A and Maryland Supplement to Bulletin 16A.

Provide a photocopy USGS map illustrating the location of the bridge.

Surveyor:

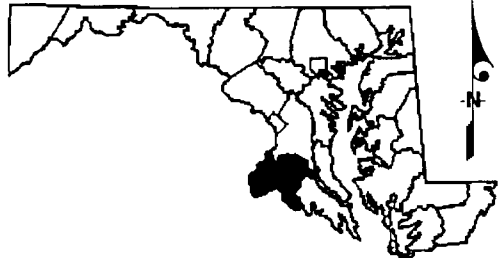
Name:	<u>Alice Crampton/Julie Abell</u>	Date:	<u>12/16/94</u>
Organization:	<u>Parsons Engineering Science, Inc.</u>	Telephone:	<u>(703) 591-7575</u>
Address:	<u>10521 Rosehaven Street</u>		
	<u>Fairfax, Virginia 22030-2899</u>		

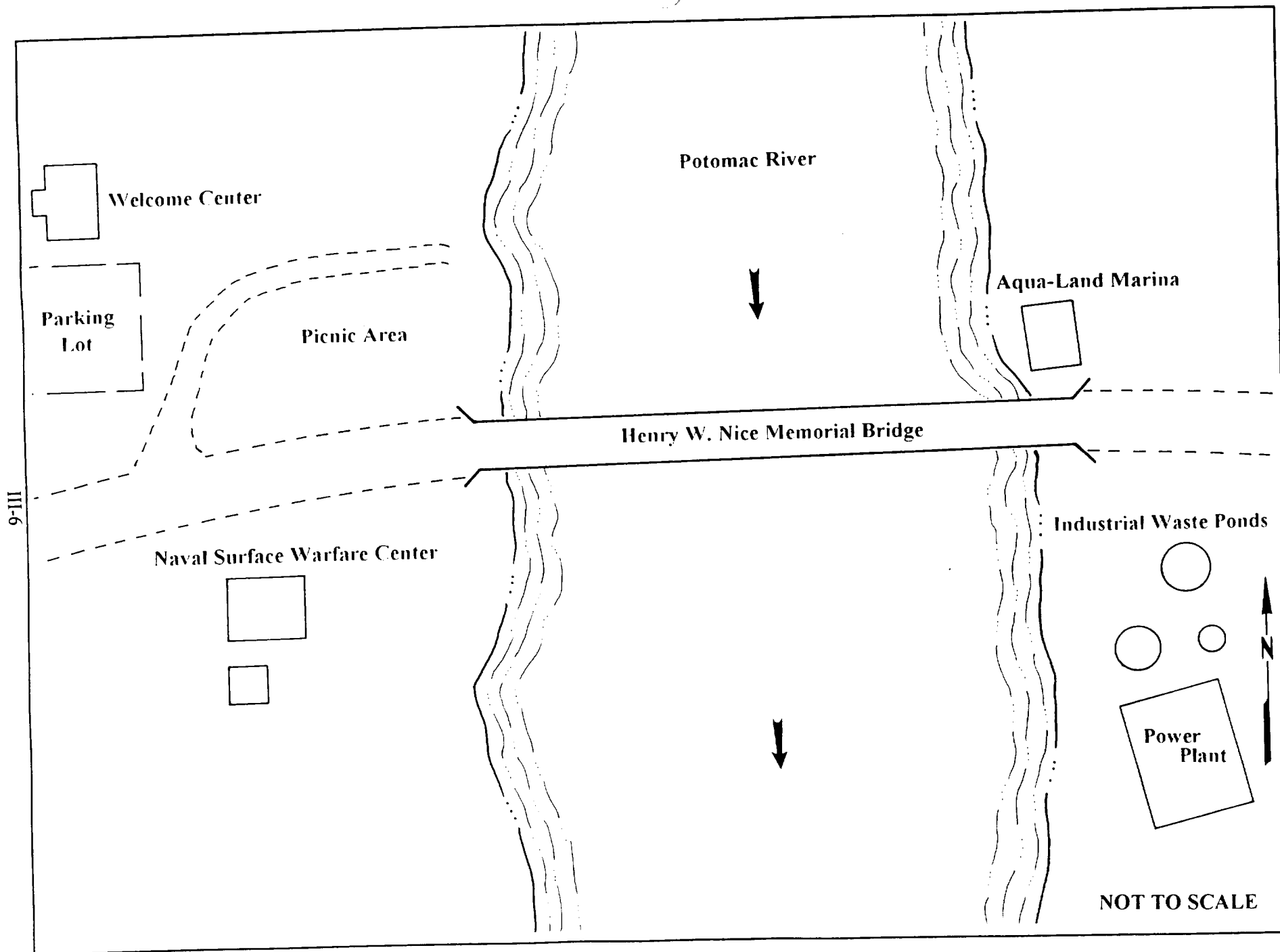


Charles County

US 301 over Potomac River - Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge

Scale 0 1000 2000 feet
0 0.5 kilometer





CH-326



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge

Charles County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

Northwest elevation

1 of 9



SH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration
Northwest elevation, detail

2 of 9



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland

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Maryland State Highway Administration
Northwest elevation, detail

3 of 9



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland

Julie Abell

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Maryland State Highway Administration
Southeast elevation

4 of 9



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland

Julie Abell

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Maryland State Highway Administration
Southeast elevation, detail

5 of 9



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland
Julie Abell

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Maryland State Highway Administration
Southeast elevation, detail

6 of 9



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland
Julie Abell

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Maryland State Highway Administration
Southeast elevation, detail

7 of 9



CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland

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Maryland State Highway Administration

Approach looking northeast

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CH-376

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge
Charles County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration
Approach looking southwest

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